

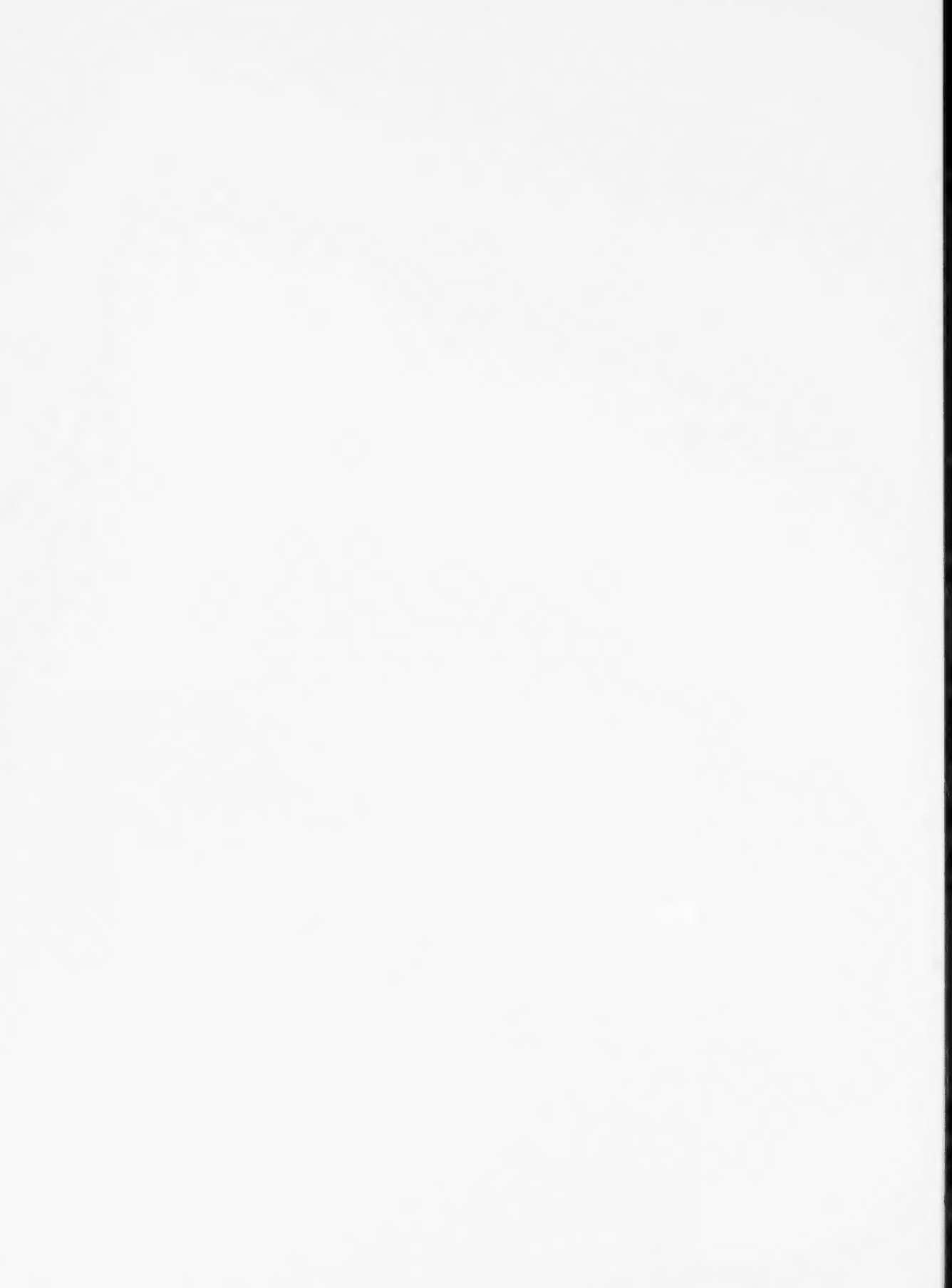
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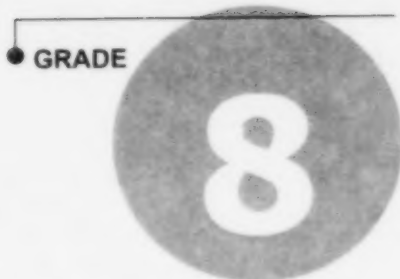
# Grade 8

Curriculum  
Handbook  
for Parents

**we** engage  
engager







# Curriculum Handbook for Parents

**2009–2010**

This Curriculum Handbook provides parents with information about the Grade 8 curriculum. It includes:

- selected learning outcomes for each subject area from the provincial curriculum
- links to the Alberta Education Web site where more information can be found
- information on a personal and career development and planning for senior high school
- a feedback form.

# Alberta Education

This document, along with most Alberta Education documents, can be found on the Web site at <http://education.alberta.ca>.

Parent documents referenced in this handbook, along with most Alberta Education documents, are available for purchase from:

Learning Resources Centre  
12360 – 142 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5L 4X9  
Telephone: 780-427-2767  
Toll-free: 310-0000 (inside Alberta)  
Fax: 780-422-9750  
Internet: <http://lrc.education.gov.ab.ca/pro/default.html>

Telephone numbers referred to in this handbook can be reached, toll-free inside Alberta, by dialling 310-0000.

Arts, Communications and Citizenship  
Telephone: 780-427-2984  
Fax: 780-422-3745  
E-mail: [curric.contact@education.gov.ab.ca](mailto:curric.contact@education.gov.ab.ca)

French Language Education Services  
Telephone: 780-427-2940  
Fax: 780-422-1947  
E-mail: [LSB@edc.gov.ab.ca](mailto:LSB@edc.gov.ab.ca)

Digital Design and Resource Authorization  
Telephone: 780-427-2984  
Fax: 780-422-3745  
E-mail: [curric.contact@education.gov.ab.ca](mailto:curric.contact@education.gov.ab.ca)

Learner Assessment  
Telephone: 780-427-0010  
Fax: 780-422-4200  
E-mail: [LAcontact@edc.gov.ab.ca](mailto:LAcontact@edc.gov.ab.ca)

Distributed Learning  
Telephone: 780-674-5350  
Fax: 780-674-6561  
E-mail: [DLB.General@gov.ab.ca](mailto:DLB.General@gov.ab.ca)

Mathematics and Science  
Telephone: 780-427-2984  
Fax: 780-422-3745  
E-mail: [curric.contact@education.gov.ab.ca](mailto:curric.contact@education.gov.ab.ca)

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Services  
Telephone: 780-415-9300  
Fax: 780-415-9306  
E-mail: [FNMIServices@gov.ab.ca](mailto:FNMIServices@gov.ab.ca)

Special Education Branch  
Telephone: 780-422-6326  
Fax: 780-422-2039  
E-mail: [Special.Education@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Special.Education@gov.ab.ca)

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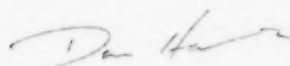
*Message from the*  
**Minister of Education**

In today's busy households, where our Kindergarten to Grade 12 students are involved in every kind of extracurricular activity imaginable, it is especially important parents and guardians are kept informed about what their students are learning in the classroom. That is why each year Alberta Education develops the curriculum handbooks series—an insightful guide that outlines what students across the province will learn at their respective grade levels.

We know you play a critical role in determining your child's future success. I am confident this handbook will engage you in Alberta's curriculum, your student's studies, and answer any questions you may have on what your child is learning. I also hope this publication will create an opportunity for open dialogue between you, your child and his or her teacher regarding curriculum outcomes and expectations.

Alberta's curriculum is recognized for its excellence—and our students are thriving as a result. I encourage you to see this handbook as a window into your child's learning and as a resource in understanding how we help students reach their full potential. If you have any questions about the content of this handbook, do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or school.

I hope you find this handbook helpful and informative and I wish you and your student every success this school year.



Dave Hancock, Q.C.  
Minister, Alberta Education





## ► Introduction

Web site links for further information are provided throughout the handbook.

Students learn in a variety of environments—in their homes, schools and communities. Parents, teachers and community members form a partnership to assist this learning.

When parents know what children are studying at school, they can provide better home support for their children's learning. The *Curriculum Handbooks for Parents* are designed to assist parents in participating in their child's education by fostering an understanding of what students learn at each grade level.

### Finding Information

Parents can find information about the curriculum and learning resources in a number of ways:

- Contact teachers or school administrators.
- **Curriculum Handbooks** contain selected outcomes for each subject area from the Alberta programs of study. They provide a more detailed picture of each year. This Curriculum Handbook is one of a set from Kindergarten to senior high school produced in general and Catholic versions and in French. They are available on the Alberta Education Web site or for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).
- **Curriculum Summaries** for each grade level provide a brief overview of each year. The summaries are available on the Alberta Education Web site.

<http://education.alberta.ca/parents/resources/handbook.aspx>

<http://education.alberta.ca/parents/resources/summaries.aspx>

<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program.aspx>

<http://education.alberta.ca/apps/lrdb>

<http://education.alberta.ca>

- In Alberta, the provincial curriculum is organized into **Programs of Study**. They contain learning outcomes for each subject area from Kindergarten to Grade 12. They are legal documents that outline why the educational program is offered, what students are expected to learn and the basic principles about how students are to achieve the required knowledge, skills and attitudes. School authorities use the **Programs of Study** to ensure that students meet provincial standards of achievement. However, they have flexibility to decide how to teach the curriculum and the order in which it is taught. They are available on the Alberta Education Web site or for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).
- The Authorized Resources Database on the Alberta Education Web site lists **Alberta authorized student and teacher resources**, most of which are available for purchase from the LRC.
- The **Alberta Education Web site** contains information on learning from the early years to adulthood.

## Helping Your Child at Home

Here are some important pointers for you to help your child learn.

- Be positive and encouraging in your approach to learning. It will help your child feel confident and enthusiastic about success.
- Talk to your child about schoolwork and help with homework when you can.
- Help your child set realistic goals and discuss progress in an encouraging way.
- Connect your child's schoolwork with everyday life and use these opportunities for problem solving in everyday situations.
- Keep in touch with teachers about your child's progress, including successes and achievements, not just concerns.

The following resources may help you. Check your child's school for availability.

This resource is available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC). Order online at <http://lrc.education.gov.ab.ca/pro/default.html>

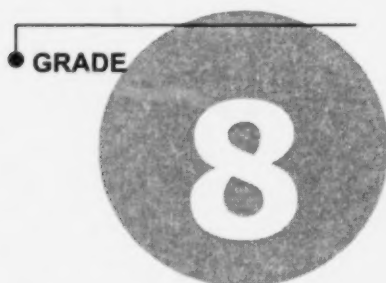
- *Make School Work for You: A Resource for Junior and Senior High Students Who Want to Be More Successful Learners*—Information on knowing yourself, getting organized, making every class count, test taking, presenting learning, getting along with others and staying motivated.

- *The Parent Advantage: Helping Children Become More Successful Learners at Home and School, Grades 1–9*—Strategies parents can use to help their child improve organizational, reading, writing, spelling, mathematical, test taking and project skills at the grades 1–9 levels.
- *Working Together in Mathematics Education*—Ways parents can support student learning in mathematics.
- *LearnAlberta.ca* Web site—Online multimedia learning resources that directly relate to the Alberta programs of study.
- *TELUS 2Learn* Web site—An education/business partnership that provides Internet in-service, support and information for Alberta teachers, students and parents.

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/356481/mathprbk.pdf>

<http://learnalberta.ca>

<http://www.2learn.ca>



In Grade 8, students study required subject areas. They also choose optional courses that give them the chance to explore areas of interest and career possibilities. Students have access to a minimum of 950 hours of instruction each school year.

## Overview

The Grade 8 Alberta program of studies for each subject area sets out general outcomes or topics that provide an overview of the important learnings students accomplish. Specific outcomes are included for each general outcome or topic and state in detail the knowledge, skills and attitudes students are working toward achieving.

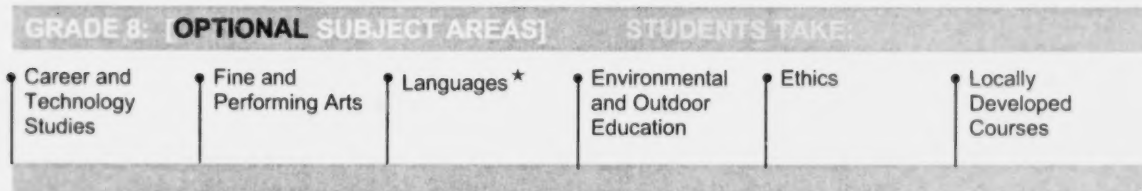
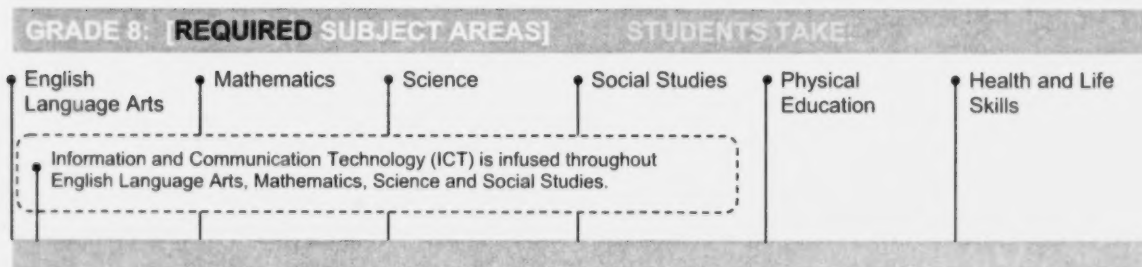
View the programs of study at  
<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program.aspx>

Purchase programs of study from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).  
 Order online at  
<http://lrc.education.gov.ab.ca/pro/default.html>

This handbook contains:

- the general outcomes or topics for each subject area
- selected specific outcomes for most subject areas.

The programs of study, which include all the general and specific outcomes, are available on the Alberta Education Web site or for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).



\* Students in French immersion programs and bilingual programs in other languages take English language arts as well as language arts in the target language.

**New Courses for 2009–2010 School Year:**

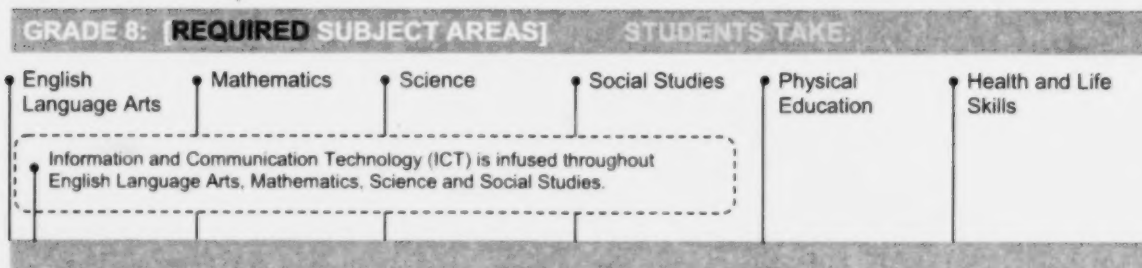
- First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Language and Culture
  - Cree Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
- International Languages
  - German Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
  - Japanese Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
  - Punjabi Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
  - Ukrainian Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
- Mathematics (English and French)

**Courses Scheduled for Implementation in 2010–2011:**

- International Languages
  - Chinese Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
  - Spanish Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)



The **required subject areas** are the foundation of the elementary program.



## English Language Arts

View the English language arts subject page at  
<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/english.aspx>

View the English language arts digital resources on the LearnAlberta.ca Web site at <http://learnalberta.ca>

There are two basic aims of English language arts. One aim is to encourage, in students, an understanding and appreciation of the significance and artistry of literature. A second aim is to enable each student to understand and appreciate language and to use it confidently and competently for a variety of purposes, with diverse audiences and in a range of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and learning.

From Kindergarten to Grade 12, students are developing knowledge, skills and attitudes in six language arts: Listening and Speaking; Reading and Writing; Viewing and Representing. Students learn to compose, comprehend and respond to oral, print and other media texts. They experience a variety of texts from many cultural traditions.

**The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 8 English Language Arts Program of Studies.**

### Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences

- seek out and consider diverse ideas, opinions and experiences to develop and extend own ideas, opinions and experiences
- examine and reflect on own growth in effective use of language to revise and extend personal goals
- acknowledge the value of the ideas and opinions of others in exploring and extending personal interpretations and perspectives
- exchange ideas and opinions to clarify understanding and to broaden personal perspectives

**Comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts**

- use knowledge of authors, forms and genres, developed during previous reading, to direct and extend reading experiences
- take notes, make outlines and use such strategies as read, recite, review to comprehend and remember ideas and information
- choose and use strategies for word identification, vocabulary development and spelling that either build on specific strengths or address areas for improvement
- discuss various ways characters are developed and the reasons for and plausibility of character change
- compare and contrast the different perspectives provided by first and third person narration
- choose forms or genres of oral, print or other media texts for the particular affects they will have on audiences and purposes

**Manage ideas and information**

- identify and trace the development of arguments, opinions or points of view in oral, print and other media texts
- select the most appropriate information sources for topic, audience, purpose and form
- record key ideas and information from oral, print and other media texts, avoiding overuse of direct quotations
- make notes in point form, summarizing major ideas and supporting details; reference sources
- communicate ideas and information in a variety of oral, print and other media texts, such as interviews, minilessons and documentaries
- assess the research process, and consider alternative ways of achieving research goals

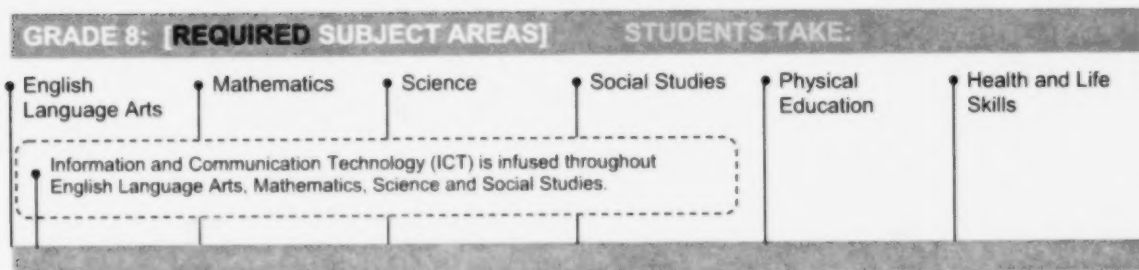
**Enhance the clarity and artistry of communication**

- revise by adding words and phrases that emphasize important ideas or create dominant impressions
- vary handwriting style and pace, depending on the context, audience and purpose
- choose an effective format for documents, depending on the content, audience and purpose
- use verb tenses consistently throughout a piece of writing
- use knowledge of spelling generalizations and how words are formed to spell technical terms and unfamiliar words in own writing
- plan and facilitate small group and short, whole class presentations to share information
- present information to achieve a particular purpose and to appeal to interest and background knowledge of reader or audience
- anticipate the organizational pattern of presentations, and identify important ideas and supporting details

**Respect, support and collaborate with others**

- compare ways in which oral, print and other media texts reflect specific elements of cultures or periods in history
- use inclusive language and actions that demonstrate respect for people of different races, cultures, genders, ages and abilities
- use opportunities as a group member to contribute to group goals and extend own learning
- organize and complete tasks cooperatively by defining roles and responsibilities, negotiating to find the basis for agreement, setting objectives and time frames, and reviewing progress
- evaluate the quality of own contributions to group process, and offer constructive feedback to others; propose suggestions for improvement





## Mathematics

View the mathematics subject page at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/math.aspx>

View mathematics digital resources on the LearnAlberta.ca Web site at <http://learnalberta.ca>

The main goals of mathematics education are to prepare students to:

- use mathematics to solve problems
- communicate and reason mathematically
- appreciate and value mathematics
- make connections between mathematics and its applications
- commit themselves to lifelong learning
- become mathematically literate adults, using mathematics to contribute to society.

Students who have met these goals will:

- gain understanding and appreciation of the contributions of mathematics as a science, philosophy and art
- exhibit a positive attitude toward mathematics
- engage and persevere in mathematical tasks and projects
- contribute to mathematical discussions
- take risks in performing mathematical tasks
- exhibit curiosity.

**The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 8 Mathematics Program of Studies.**

### Number

- demonstrate an understanding of perfect squares and square roots, concretely, pictorially and symbolically (limited to whole numbers)
- demonstrate an understanding of ratio and rate

- demonstrate an understanding of multiplying and dividing positive fractions and mixed numbers, concretely, pictorially and symbolically
- demonstrate an understanding of multiplication and division of integers, concretely, pictorially and symbolically

### Patterns and Relations

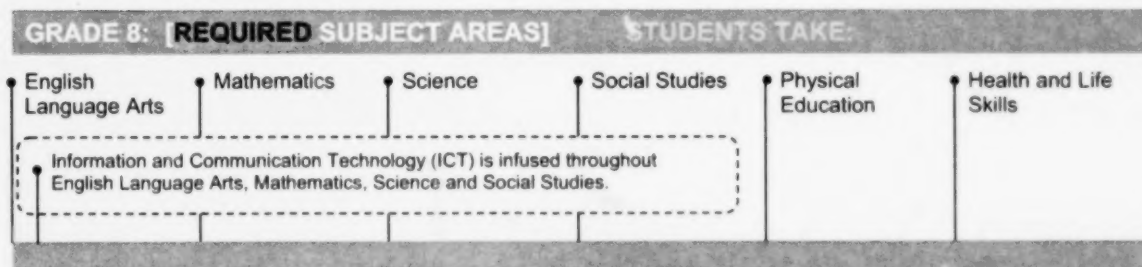
- graph and analyze two-variable linear relations
- model and solve problems concretely, pictorially and symbolically, using linear equations of the form:
  - $ax = b$
  - $\frac{x}{a} = b, a \neq 0$
  - $ax + b = c$
  - $\frac{x}{a} + b = c, a \neq 0$
  - $a(x + b) = c$where  $a, b$  and  $c$  are integers

### Shape and Space

- develop and apply the Pythagorean theorem to solve problems
- develop and apply formulas for determining the volume of right rectangular prisms, right triangular prisms and right cylinders
- draw and interpret top, front and side views of 3-D objects composed of right rectangular prisms
- demonstrate an understanding of the congruence of polygons

### Statistics and Probability

- critique ways in which data is presented in circle graphs, line graphs, bar graphs and pictographs
- solve problems involving the probability of independent events



## Science

View the science subject page at  
<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/science.aspx>

View science digital resources on the  
 LearnAlberta.ca Web site  
 at <http://learnalberta.ca>

The secondary science program is guided by the vision that all students have the opportunity to develop scientific literacy. The goal of scientific literacy is to develop the science-related knowledge, skills and attitudes that students need to solve problems and make decisions, and at the same time help them become lifelong learners—maintaining their sense of wonder about the world around them.

The program is designed to help students understand the nature and role of science, as well as develop a solid grounding in science knowledge, skills and attitudes. Throughout the program, students learn that:

- science provides an ordered way of studying the natural world
- scientific discovery often leads to the development of new technologies and new technologies can lead to new fields of scientific investigation
- science takes place in a social context and responds to human needs. Science and technology have both intended and unintended consequences for humans and the environment.

**Students study five units during their Grade 8 year. The topics studied and the major outcomes for each are:**

### Mix and Flow of Matter

- describe fluids used in technological devices and everyday materials
- describe the composition of fluids, and interpret the behaviour of materials in solution
- investigate and compare the properties of gases and liquids
- identify technologies based on properties of fluids

**Cells and Systems**

- investigate living things and their general structure, function and organization
- investigate and describe the role of cells within living things
- interpret the healthy function of human body systems, and illustrate ways the body reacts to stimuli
- describe areas of scientific investigation leading to new knowledge about body systems and to new medical applications

**Light and Optical Systems**

- investigate the nature of light and vision
- investigate the transmission of light, and describe its behaviour
- investigate and explain the science of image formation and vision

**Mechanical Systems**

- describe and compare mechanical devices that have been improved over time
- analyze machines by describing the overall system, the subsystems and the component parts
- describe the transmission of force and energy between parts of a mechanical system
- analyze the social and environmental contexts of science and technology, as they apply to the development of mechanical devices

**Freshwater and Saltwater Systems**

- describe the distribution and characteristics of water in local and global environments, and identify the significance of water supply and quality to the needs of humans and other living things
- investigate and interpret linkages among landforms, water and climate
- analyze factors affecting productivity and species distribution in marine and freshwater environments
- analyze human impacts on aquatic systems

The program develops **skills** in four major areas:

**Initiating and Planning**

Students devise (or make) plans to investigate:

- science-inquiry questions
- practical problems
- science-related issues.

**Performing and Recording**

Students conduct investigations through:

- observation
- recording data
- researching information.

**Analyzing and Interpreting**

Students develop, analyze and assess possible explanations through:

- data display
- inference
- evaluation.

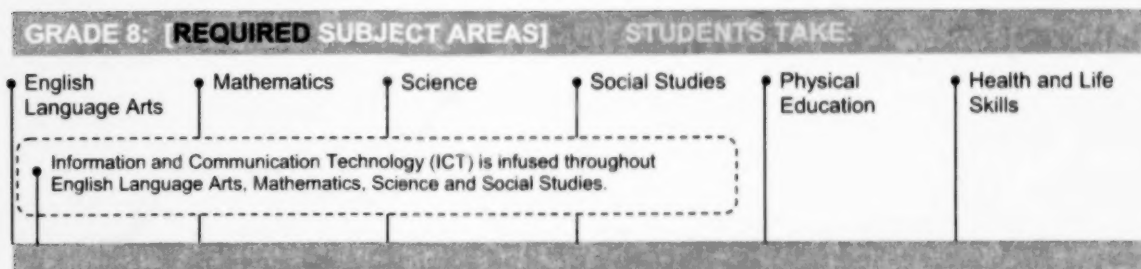
**Communication and Teamwork**

Students work collaboratively to:

- communicate questions, ideas, procedures and results
- evaluate individual and group processes
- defend a position or conclusion, based on their findings.

To support their learning, students are encouraged to develop positive **attitudes** in the following six areas:

- continuing interest in science
- respect for the ideas of people with various backgrounds and views
- support for scientific processes
- collaboration with others
- stewardship for the natural environment
- safety in science.



## Social Studies

View the social studies subject page at  
<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/socialstudies.aspx>

The aim of the social studies program is to promote a sense of belonging and acceptance in students as they engage in active and responsible citizenship. At the heart of Alberta's social studies program are the concepts of citizenship and identity in the Canadian context. It also includes multiple perspectives, including Aboriginal and Francophone, that contribute to Canada's identity. The program also has a strong focus on Canadian and Alberta history.

Grade 8 students will learn how intercultural contact between societies leads to significant change and alters each society's worldview.

Grade 8 students will examine issues related to contact between societies with differing worldviews. They will explore elements of worldviews and how these views are expressed by people living in different times and in different places. Through this inquiry, students will reflect on their own worldviews and assess the influence that the past has had on the present. Examples will be drawn from Japan, Renaissance Europe and Spanish and Aztec societies.

**The following learning outcomes are selected from the Grade 8 Social Studies Program of Studies.**

### **From Isolation to Adaptation: Japan**

Through an examination of Japan, students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the ways in which beliefs, values and knowledge shape worldviews and contribute to a society's isolation or adaptation.

#### ***Values and Attitudes***

- appreciate the roles of time and geographic location in shaping a society's worldview
- appreciate how a society's worldview shapes individual citizenship and identity

#### ***Knowledge and Understanding***

analyze the effects of cultural isolation during the Edo period by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- How did the changes resulting from isolation affect Japan economically, politically and socially during the Edo period?

analyze the effects that rapid adaptation had on traditionally isolated Japan during the Meiji period by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- How did Japan adapt to changes brought on by the transition from feudal to modern models of organization?
- In what ways did the changes resulting from isolation in the Edo period compare to changes resulting from adaptation in the Meiji period?

### **Origins of a Western Worldview: Renaissance Europe**

Through an examination of Renaissance Europe, students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how the exchange of ideas and knowledge contributed to shaping the worldview of the Western world.

**Values and Attitudes**

- appreciate how Renaissance Europe formed the basis for the worldview of the Western world
- recognize how beliefs and values are shaped by time, geographic location and societal context

**Knowledge and Understanding**

examine, critically, the factors that shaped the worldview evolving in western Europe during the Renaissance by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- How did the Renaissance spark the growth and exchange of ideas and knowledge across Europe (i.e., astronomy, mathematics, science, politics, religion, arts)?

**Worldviews in Conflict: The Spanish and the Aztecs**

Through an examination of Spanish and Aztec societies, students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how intercultural contact affects the worldviews of societies.

**Values and Attitudes**

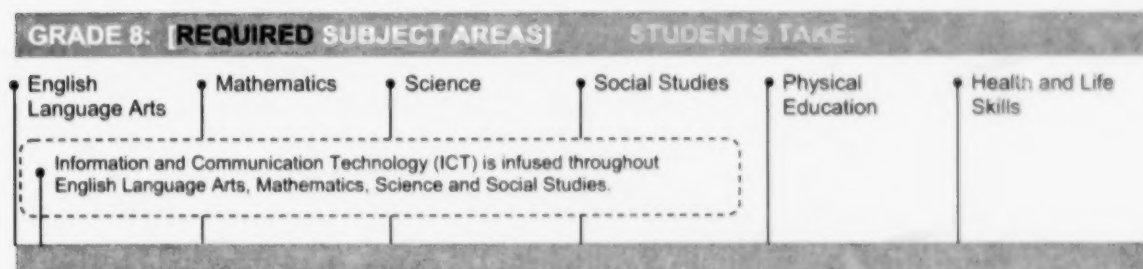
- appreciate how a society's worldview influences the society's choices, decisions and interactions with other societies

**Knowledge and Understanding**

assess, critically, how the Aztecs were affected by the Spanish worldview by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- What were the key elements of the worldview of the Aztec civilization prior to contact with the Spanish?
- In what ways did factors such as technology and disease contribute to the dominance of the Spanish over the Aztec civilization?





### Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

View the information and communication technology subject page at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/socialstudies.aspx>

Students learn how to use and apply a variety of information and communication technologies; the nature of technology and the importance of technology in daily life. ICT is learned most effectively in the context of subject areas such as language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The ICT curriculum is not intended to be taught as a stand-alone course but rather to be infused within the teaching of other programs of study.

**The ICT Program of Studies is organized by division. The following is a sample of the Division 3 learning outcomes that students are expected to meet by the end of Grade 9.**

#### **Communicating, Inquiring, Decision Making and Problem Solving**

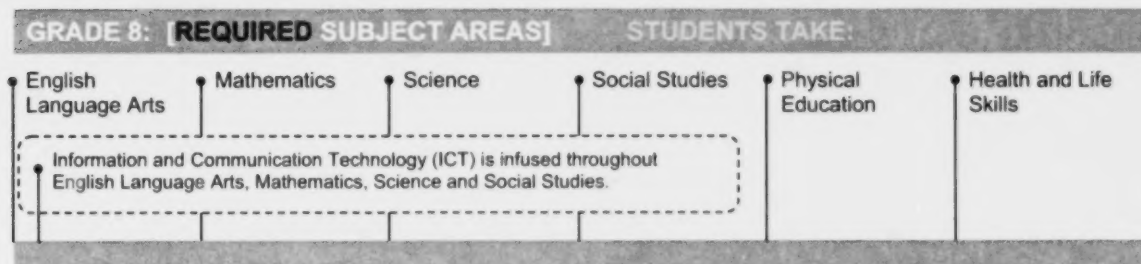
- evaluate the authority and reliability of electronic sources
- develop a process to manage volumes of information that can be made available through electronic sources

#### **Foundational Operations, Knowledge and Concepts**

- explain the issues involved in balancing the right to access information with the right to personal privacy
- recognize that the ability of technology to manipulate images and sound can alter the meaning of a communication

**Processes for Productivity**

- use advanced word processing menu features to accomplish a task; for example, insert a table, graph or text from another document
- demonstrate proficient use of various information retrieval technologies



## Physical Education

View the physical education subject page at  
<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/pe.aspx>

The aim of the K–12 physical education program is to enable individuals to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to lead an active, healthy lifestyle. Students participate in a variety of physical activities: dance, games, types of gymnastics, individual activities and activities in alternative environments, such as aquatics and outdoor pursuits. All learning outcomes are to be met through physical activity as a means of fostering a desire in students to participate in lifelong physical activity.



### General Outcome A: Activity

*Students will* acquire skills through a variety of developmentally appropriate movement activities; dance, games, types of gymnastics, individual activities and activities in an alternative environment; e.g., aquatics and outdoor pursuits.

- Basic Skills; Locomotor; Nonlocomotor; Manipulative
- Application of Basic Skills in an Alternative Environment, Dance, Games, Types of Gymnastics, Individual Activities

General outcomes B, C and D are interrelated and interdependent and are achieved through involvement in movement activities identified in General Outcome A.

**General Outcome B: Benefits Health**

*Students will understand, experience and appreciate the health benefits that result from physical activity.*

- Functional Fitness
- Body Image
- Well-being

**General Outcome C: Cooperation**

*Students will interact positively with others.*

- Communication
- Fair Play
- Leadership
- Teamwork

**General Outcome D: Do it Daily ... for Life!**

*Students will assume responsibility to lead an active way of life.*

- Effort
- Safety
- Goal Setting/Personal Challenge
- Active Living in the Community

**Exemptions from Physical Education**

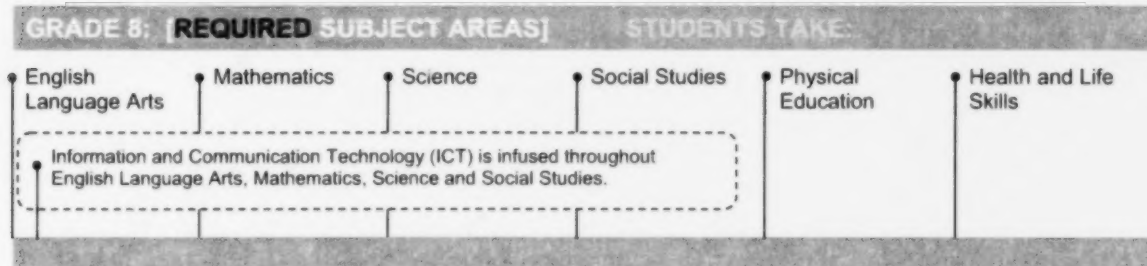
Exemptions from participation in physical education may be given for medical conditions, when accompanied by a medical certificate from a doctor to the principal; for religious beliefs, when accompanied by a statement in writing from the parent to the principal; and where access to facilities is prohibitive. When exemption is granted, activities consistent with the program outcomes should be substituted, where appropriate.

### Physical Education Online

<http://education.alberta.ca/physicaleducationonline>

The Physical Education Online Web site provides a wealth of information to support student learning of the K–12 physical education program of studies. The site is organized into three major sections:

- Program of Studies—The general outcomes and grade specific outcomes for K–12.
- Teacher Resources—Links to authorized resources, the Guide to Implementation, teaching tools, and activities and lessons that address the outcomes for the K–12 physical education program.
- Home Education—This portion is designed for parents and teachers to use with students who may be enrolled in an online or home education physical education course.



## Health and Life Skills

View the health and life skills subject page at  
<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/health.aspx>

The aim of the health and life skills program is to enable students to make well-informed, healthy choices and to develop behaviours that contribute to the well-being of self and others. A comprehensive health program involves a partnership among home, school and community.



### Wellness Choices

*Students will* make responsible and informed choices to maintain health and promote safety for self and others.

- Personal health
- Safety and responsibility



### Relationship Choices

*Students will* develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.

- Understanding and expressing feelings
- Interactions
- Group roles and processes



### Life Learning Choices

*Students will* use resources effectively to manage and explore life roles and career opportunities and challenges.

- Learning strategies
- Life roles and career development
- Volunteerism

### Human Sexuality Education

Schools are required to offer human sexuality education in Grade 4 to Grade 9. Parents have the right to exempt their child from this instruction. Schools will provide alternative learning experiences for those students who have been exempted from human sexuality instruction.

▼ In addition to required subject areas, junior high schools must offer a minimum of two provincially authorized optional courses. Optional courses are designed to reinforce learnings in core courses and to provide opportunities for students to explore areas of interest and career possibilities.

The range of optional subject areas offered by elementary schools varies from school to school depending on such factors as student and parent preferences, facilities and staffing.

#### GRADE 8: [OPTIONAL SUBJECT AREAS]

#### STUDENTS MAY SELECT FROM:

• Career and Technology Studies

• Fine and Performing Arts

• Languages

• Environmental and Outdoor Education

• Ethics

• Locally Developed Courses

### Career and Technology Studies

View the career and technology studies subject page at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/cts.aspx>

View CTS digital resources on the LearnAlberta.ca Web site at <http://learnalberta.ca/>

Career and Technology Studies (CTS) is an optional program designed to develop skills that senior high school students can apply in their daily lives when preparing for entry into the workplace or for further learning opportunities. Introductory level courses in CTS strands; in the Business, Administration, Finance & Information Technology (BIT) cluster; and in the Trades, Manufacturing & Transportation (TMT) cluster are considered appropriate for junior high school students.

CTS is organized into five clusters:

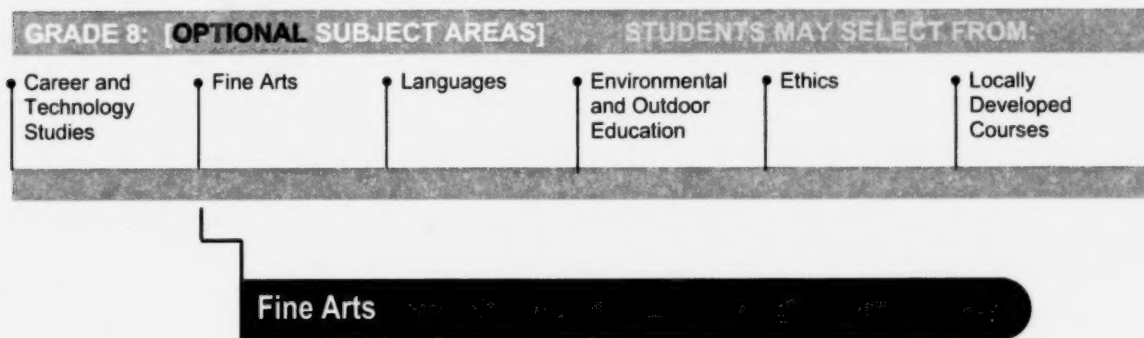
- Business, Administration, Finance & Information Technology (BIT)
- Health, Recreation & Human Services (HRH)
- Media, Design & Communication Arts (MDC)
- Natural Resources (NAT)
- Trades, Manufacturing & Transportation (TMT).

A cluster is a grouping of 1-credit courses in CTS that represents occupations and broad industry commonalities. Clusters connect learning outcomes specific to the knowledge, skills and attributes for related occupational, specialized skill or credentialed pathways.



CTS clusters will be implemented gradually beginning in September 2009. Business, Administration, Finance & Information Technology (BIT) and Trades, Manufacturing & Transportation (TMT) will be implemented in September 2009. The remaining three clusters will be implemented in September 2010. Courses in the following strands will remain in effect until implementation of the Media, Design & Communication Arts (MDC), Natural Resources (NAT) and Health, Recreation & Human Services (HRH) clusters in September 2010:

Agriculture	Fashion Studies
Career Transitions	Foods
Communication Technology	Forestry
Community Health	Legal Studies
Cosmetology Studies	Tourism Studies
Design Studies	Wildlife
Energy and Mines	



View the fine arts subject page at  
<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/finearts.aspx>

Through the Fine and Performing Arts courses of Art, Drama and Music, students develop self-awareness and express their creativity in many ways. They will respond personally and critically to a variety of art, drama and music styles and forms.

### Art

Students learn how to use traditional and contemporary tools, materials and media to express their feelings, think like artists, value the art creation and value the art form. Three areas form the framework of the junior high school art program:

- Drawings—recording, investigating, communicating, evaluating and articulating aspects of making images
- Compositions—organizations, components and relationships involved in the creation of images
- Encounters—looking at images and artifacts, finding ideas for making art, learning about the art of other times, changing imagery, and learning to understand and appreciate the purposes and effects of art

### Drama

Drama encourages students to explore a variety of dramatic roles and develop a range of dramatic skills. In the junior high school drama program, students learn about drama and theatre through:

- Movement—physical, nonverbal expression
- Speech—exploration of talking and speaking to communicate ideas effectively
- Improvisation/Acting—acting out an idea or situation

- Theatre Studies—an introduction to the elements of drama and theatre
- Technical Theatre—stage construction and the use of sound, lighting, makeup, costumes, sets and props.

### **Music**

Instrumental music, choral music and general music are the three distinctive, yet related, programs in the junior high school music curriculum. Development in any of these programs requires student involvement as a performer, listener and composer. Five main goals of the junior high school music program are to:

- develop skills in listening to, performing and reading music
- strive for musical excellence
- understand, evaluate and appreciate a variety of music styles
- develop self-expression, creativity and communication through music
- increase awareness of the history of music and the role of music in own lives.

**GRADE 8: [OPTIONAL SUBJECT AREAS]****STUDENTS MAY SELECT FROM:**

• Career and Technology Studies

• Fine and Performing Arts

• Languages

• Environmental and Outdoor Education

• Ethics

• Locally Developed Courses

**Languages**

<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/resources/learnlang/educators/toolkit.aspx>

A variety of courses in languages are available throughout Alberta. These courses include First Nations, Métis and Inuit languages, French and International languages.

Alberta school authorities implement language programs, either:

- by choosing from available provincial programs or
- through a locally-developed course series.

**First Nations, Métis and Inuit Languages****Blackfoot and Cree Language and Culture**

<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/fnmi.aspx>

Blackfoot and Cree language and culture programs are designed to enable students to learn their respective languages and to increase awareness of their cultures.

**The following learning outcomes are selected from the Blackfoot and Cree Language and Culture Programs of Study.**

**Blackfoot**

- acquire basic communication skills in the Blackfoot language
- develop cultural sensitivity, and enhance personal development
- develop a desire to extend or improve proficiency in the Blackfoot language

**Cree**

- use Cree in a variety of community and school situations and for a variety of purposes
- be effective, competent and comfortable as Cree speakers (*Okiskinamawākanak ka nihtā nehiyawewak*)

- live (*wa*)*wētina(hk)* (peacefully) with Mother Earth, others and themselves, guided by *Ômâwawi Ohtâwimâw* (the Creator)
- know and use various strategies to maximize the effectiveness of learning and communication

## French

### French Immersion Program

<http://education.alberta.ca/parents/educationsys/frenchlanguage/immersion.aspx>

In Alberta, many students have the opportunity to study in a French immersion program. This program, designed for non-French speaking students, offers an effective way for students to become functionally fluent in French while achieving all of the learning outcomes of the regular programs of study. Graduates from French immersion programs achieve a level of fluency in the target language that allows them to pursue their post-secondary studies in French or to accept employment in a workplace where French is the main language of communication.

There are many delivery models for French immersion present in Alberta schools.

- Early immersion—students begin their immersion experience in Kindergarten and continue in the program to Grade 12.
- Late immersion—the entry point is typically Grade 7.

Courses offered in the French language have as their basis a French version of the English language programs of study, which is identical or comparable to the one used in the English language programs. However, a program of studies specific to French immersion students was developed for the learning/teaching of French language arts. Some of the main French language arts learning outcomes are presented in the following section, French Language Arts.

A resource that may be helpful to parents is *Yes, You Can Help! Information and Inspiration for French Immersion Parents*. It is available for purchase from the LRC.

### French Language Arts

<http://education.alberta.ca/francais/teachers/progres/core/fla.aspx>

At the junior high school level, the French language arts program of studies is intended to continue work started at the elementary level, including vocabulary and sentence structure enrichment, to enable students to engage more actively and effectively in proposed activities. Students become aware of elements that ensure message clarity, such as exact, precise expressions and words, and correct, increasingly complex sentences. They learn to respect the basic rules of language in the oral exchanges that take place in the classroom as well as in their writing projects.

The acquisition of a solid language basis allows students to better understand, clarify and express abstract thoughts. The program of studies also targets the development of the students' ability to plan and monitor their communication projects, whether they are working individually, with classroom partners, or participating in activities organized by the Francophone community. Students become more aware of factors that influence the way they communicate effectively in various contexts.

In **oral comprehension**, students learn to pay particular attention to the organization of a message (text structure and genre) and to their knowledge about the author, producer or broadcast to guide them in their listening. They learn to question their attitudes toward the task and the means they use to overcome difficulties.

In **reading comprehension**, students develop their reading ability by analyzing the task at hand and choosing the best way to tackle more complex passages. They improve their ability to analyze text characteristics for better understanding of internal organization (text structure and genre) and the author's intent.

In **oral production**, students learn the vocabulary and sentence structure that will enable them to express themselves in various contexts. They develop the ability to plan group projects and to interact effectively with their peers.

In **writing**, students gradually learn to develop a work plan that will enable them to complete their writing project more efficiently. They learn to organize and express their ideas clearly, while still respecting the rules of internal text organization and spelling. They also learn to edit their texts using various reference works.

**Note:** The development of basic language skills does not take place in isolated exercises, but rather in context, so that students learn not only the rules but also when and how to apply them.

In Grade 8, learning occurs primarily:

In **oral comprehension** through:

- group work situations
- listening to texts from various subject areas
- listening to newspaper and magazine articles, short stories or excerpts from plays or novels
- listening to audiotapes, such as songs or documentaries
- viewing audiovisual materials.

Students learn to examine the factors influencing the listening situation and become aware of their attitude toward the tasks.

**In reading comprehension:**

Teachers will select

- descriptive texts
- information and opinion texts
- texts from the imaginary world; e.g., cartoons, poetry and song.

To develop reading strategies, students learn to tackle texts taking into account their organization (e.g., descriptive) and develop various ways of annotating texts.

**In oral production:**

The proposed situations should allow students to demonstrate what they already know, what they have learned about a given subject, or to express their opinions based on examples from their readings and discussions. The topics chosen for the presentations may be from another area of study. Students should have had the opportunity to explore topic-related vocabulary in various contexts.

The presentations and discussions should be well structured, with emphasis on:

- the use of expressions or words to describe events and their experiences
- the following sequence: *subject noun (or subject pronoun) + complement pronoun – verb*
- the present subjunctive.

Emphasis on *discussion* enables students to continue developing their ability to interact with peers. Students are required to agree on the operational rules of the group as well as on their roles and responsibilities with respect to the task.

**In writing:**

Students learn to write texts in which they pay particular attention to the structure and organization of information. They also learn to write short stories in which they establish links between the feelings of characters and their actions.

The main purpose of these learning activities is to enable students to integrate the basic elements of the written language:

- the selection of a text structure consistent with their communicative intent

- the organization of ideas according to a plan—introduction, development and conclusion
- the recognition and correction of syntactic Anglicisms
- the use of present subjunctive
- the verb agreement when the subject and verb is followed by a “screen” (words in apposition) or when the subject is *qui*
- the agreement of subject and verb in the present conditional and simple future
- the position of the direct or indirect personal pronouns in declarative and interrogatory statements in simple tenses
- punctuation
- spelling.

### French as a Second Language

<http://education.alberta.ca/francais/teachers/progres/compl/fsl.aspx>

In Alberta, the French as a Second Language (FSL) Nine-year Program is a course sequence in which the French language is taught as a subject. The goal of the course is to develop students' communication skills in French and acquire an appreciation and understanding of Francophone cultures in Alberta, Canada and the world.

Grade 8 is designed so that students integrate the knowledge and skills they acquired in grades 4 to 7, while expanding their language use so they can:

- understand and communicate orally and in writing the main ideas and some isolated details in oral and written texts dealing with familiar topics, such as choice of pet and pet care, animal adoption, clothing design and choices, clothing care, nutrition, food preparation, ethnic cuisine, food and celebrations
- gain language knowledge and more sophisticated language structures to understand and communicate messages
- recognize and understand how the French language has evolved and continues to evolve
- recognize and appreciate regional differences in the French language
- demonstrate knowledge of language conventions that are culturally appropriate, such as the abbreviations and symbols for measurement, currency symbols and spacing of numbers and certain punctuation marks
- continue to develop and use language learning strategies so as to become more effective and efficient learners of French.



## International Languages

### Bilingual Programs

<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/interlang.aspx>

Students in a bilingual program follow a language arts course in the target language (e.g., Spanish, Ukrainian) in addition to studying English language arts. In these programs, the target language is also used as the language of instruction in other subject areas, such as mathematics, science and social studies.

Students acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing. They learn to use the target language confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and further learning. They are able to explore, understand and appreciate the cultures of the target language for personal growth and satisfaction, and to participate in and contribute to an interdependent and multicultural global society.

Alberta Education offers the following provincial courses for bilingual program students:

- Chinese (Mandarin) Language Arts
- German Language Arts
- Spanish Language Arts
- Ukrainian Language Arts

### Language and Culture Programs

Students in a language and culture course study the target language (e.g., Ukrainian, German) as a subject area. Language and culture programs are designed to develop language and cultural skills.

Alberta Education offers provincially developed language and culture programs of study for Grade 7 students. At the junior high level in international languages, there are courses that may be taught that are extensions of courses that have begun at earlier entry points (Grade 1). Currently, the Italian Language and Culture (Twelve Year Program) is the only provincial course sequence that begins at Grade 1 and extends through junior high to Grade 12.

The following language and culture courses are available to students who began their study of a target language in Grade 4:

- Chinese Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
- German Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
- Japanese Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
- Punjabi Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
- Spanish Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)
- Ukrainian Language and Culture (Nine-year Program)

The following language and culture courses are available to students who begin their study of a target language in Grade 7:

- Chinese Language and Culture (Six-year Program)
- German Language and Culture (Six-year Program)
- Italian Language and Culture (Six-year Program)
- Japanese Language and Culture (Six-year Program)
- Spanish Language and Culture (Six-year Program)
- Ukrainian Language and Culture (Six-year Program)

### **Locally Developed Language Courses**

If there are no available provincial programs of study, school authorities may develop their own language course series. Currently, a variety of languages, e.g., Arabic, American Sign Language (ASL), Hebrew, Polish and Russian, are offered as local courses. Locally developed First Nations, Métis and Inuit language and culture courses may also be available to meet the needs of students in local or First Nations schools.

For more information on second language instruction offered in your area, please contact your local school board.

**GRADE 8: [OPTIONAL SUBJECT AREAS] STUDENTS MAY SELECT FROM:**• Career and  
Technology  
Studies• Fine and  
Performing Arts

• Languages

• Environmental  
and Outdoor  
Education

• Ethics

• Locally  
Developed  
Courses**Environmental and Outdoor Education**

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/768718/eoed.pdf>

In environmental and outdoor education, students develop interest and competence in outdoor studies and develop an understanding of their relationship to the environment. Environmental and outdoor education can be offered as a single course or as a sequence of courses, and includes:

- the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes required for safe and comfortable experiences
- awareness and appreciation of living things
- understanding of basic ecological processes
- skill, judgement, confidence and sensitivity in a range of environmentally responsible activities in outdoor settings
- lifestyle strategies that encourage responsibility for local and global environments.

**GRADE 8: [OPTIONAL SUBJECT AREAS]****STUDENTS MAY SELECT FROM:**Career and  
Technology  
StudiesFine and  
Performing Arts

Languages

Environmental  
and Outdoor  
Education

Ethics

Locally  
Developed  
Courses**Ethics**

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/768722/jhethics.pdf>

The ethics course is designed to help students become contributing, ethical and mature persons, and may be offered in Grade 7, Grade 8 or Grade 9. The aim of the course is to help students become more thoughtful, to think of the interests of others, and to see ethical implications in their daily lives. The ethics course includes:

- working definitions of ethics and values
- decision-making skills
- historical values and traditions
- values of different cultural groups
- responsibility to community.

**GRADE 8: [OPTIONAL SUBJECT AREAS]**

STUDENTS MAY SELECT FROM:

- Career and Technology Studies
- Fine and Performing Arts
- Languages
- Environmental and Outdoor Education
- Ethics
- Locally Developed Courses

**Locally Developed Courses**

School authorities may develop and/or acquire courses that are innovative and responsive to local and individual needs. Contact your local school authority for information about locally developed courses authorized for use in your jurisdiction.

## ► Information for Parents

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### Learning in Alberta

Schools provide students with a broad educational program that helps them:

- develop knowledge, skills and attitudes in a variety of subject areas
- demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills in problem solving and decision making
- demonstrate competence in using information technologies
- know how to learn and work independently and as part of a team
- develop desirable personal characteristics and the ability to make ethical decisions
- demonstrate initiative, leadership, flexibility and persistence
- realize the need for lifelong learning.

Schools also prepare students to make positive contributions to society through communities, the workplace and/or post-secondary studies.

Teachers make a number of decisions when planning for classroom instruction. Within any group of students, there is a range of individual differences. Teachers use the learning outcomes of the provincial curriculum to meet the needs and interests of their students and to make connections across subject areas. They choose resources, equipment and materials to help students achieve the learning outcomes. Teaching methods and schedules vary from school to school and from class to class to meet the diverse learning needs of students.

Alberta Education assists teachers by reviewing and selecting the best possible resources, such as textbooks, videotapes and computer software, for all subject areas. Authorization of resources by Alberta Education indicates that the resources meet high standards and can help students achieve the learning outcomes. Teachers can choose other resources, as long as they follow school board policy.

<http://lrc.education.gov.ab.ca/pro/default.html>

Authorized resources are available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).

## School Councils

Schools, parents and communities all play an important advisory role in education. School councils are designed to give parents, senior high school students and teachers meaningful involvement in decisions that impact student learning. Each school council determines its own level of involvement, depending on local needs. Parents can get more information on how to get involved by contacting their school or the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA).

<http://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca>

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/464094/scrm.pdf>

The *Alberta School Council Resource Manual* provides information on the operation of school councils and on key topics of importance to school councils and other education stakeholders.

## School Fees and Fundraising

Decisions regarding school fees and fundraising are made by the local board or by the school principal in consultation with the school council within policy guidelines established by the school board. In September 2000, the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) developed and provided guidelines to school boards to assist boards in establishing appropriate local policy.

[http://www.asba.ab.ca/services\\_for\\_boards/policy\\_advisories\\_fees.html](http://www.asba.ab.ca/services_for_boards/policy_advisories_fees.html)

The *School Act* allows for certain fees to be collected for alternative programs, transportation, or supplies and materials provided for the student's personal use or consumption; this may include such things as calculators, locker rentals, student planners and computer diskettes. The fees charged are on a cost recovery basis. Caution fees should be refunded at the end of the year if the item is returned in good condition.

The ASBA school fee advisory recognizes that fees should be waived for those who cannot afford them and that no student should be prohibited from participating.

[http://www.asba.ab.ca/services\\_for\\_boards/policy\\_advisories\\_fund.html](http://www.asba.ab.ca/services_for_boards/policy_advisories_fund.html)

Parents are not to fundraise for core items such as textbooks. Some fundraising is allowable for things like athletic uniforms, field trips and other extras that staff and parents want for their schools. Participation in fundraising activities should be voluntary. No student should be excluded from an event or program because the parents could not contribute.

## School Choice

<http://education.alberta.ca/parents/choice.aspx>

Choice is one of the important principles of Alberta's education system. When it comes to selecting a school, parents and students can choose from a wide range of options. They can select from public schools, Catholic schools, Francophone schools, private schools and charter schools. They can also access a number of unique and innovative programs—including online schools. Parents can also opt to home school their children.

## Inspiring Education

<http://www.inspiringeducation.alberta.ca>

*Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans* is an opportunity to shape the future of education in Alberta and we want to hear your perspective. Tell us your story. Share your opinions. Join the conversation! *Inspiring Education* is an exchange of ideas to change each other's thinking about what education is and what education means. It's about looking to the future and deciding what education in Alberta should be in 20 years.



## ► Information about Curriculum

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Alberta has one of the best education systems in the world. One of the many reasons is a centralized, high quality curriculum that outlines what students are expected to learn and be able to do in all subjects and grades. Alberta's curriculum is designed to help students achieve their individual potential and create a positive future for themselves, their families and their communities.

### **Curriculum Content— Deciding What Students Should Learn**

The Alberta curriculum strives to:

- reflect the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that Alberta students need to be well prepared for future learning and the world of work
- anticipate and plan for the needs of the future by considering the changes and developments in society such as trends in employment, globalization and advances in technology
- incorporate values of good citizenship and respect for different languages and cultures
- consider students' needs and abilities—intellectual, social, emotional and physical—at different ages and stages of growth
- ensure that each grade provides a foundation of knowledge for successful learning in subsequent years
- incorporate new discoveries and theories that are generally accepted by experts in subject areas
- develop skills that are necessary for success in learning a subject
- consider new research on proven teaching methods and how students learn best
- reflect the most appropriate level at which the skills are to be acquired
- integrate how the study of a subject contributes to student personal growth and development

- accommodate learning in different environments
- consider various ways of delivering a program to students, including new technologies and use of community resources such as distance learning and workplace learning.

## **Curriculum Development— Who Is Involved in the Process?**

Alberta Education takes a lead role in developing and revising provincial curriculum. However, many others, including teachers, principals, parents, education experts, post-secondary educators, elders and community members, play a vital role in the process. Input from various stakeholders ensures that curriculum continually meets the needs of students and that there are smooth transitions from grade to grade, to post-secondary education and to the world of work.

## **Ensuring Curriculum Is Current**

Curriculum must provide students with the knowledge and skills needed for the present and future. It is reviewed regularly and changes are made to keep it current and relevant. Curriculum revisions occur only after extensive consultations with education stakeholders.

## **Planning Curriculum Changes**

Alberta Education plans curriculum changes well in advance to minimize any impact on schools, teachers and students. This ensures that school authorities have sufficient time to prepare for the changes and plan for the purchase of any needed resources.

## **Revising Curriculum**

If it is determined through the regular review process that there is a need to make minor or major revisions to a subject area in the curriculum, education stakeholders play a major role in the process. Alberta Education conducts initial consultations and prepares a draft program of studies for that subject area. The draft is shared with a wide variety of education stakeholders through advisory committees, online feedback forms, conferences and presentations to teacher specialist councils. Teachers play a vital role in the process. They use their practical knowledge about a subject and about students' needs at specific age levels to provide input and feedback during the process.

## Implementing Curriculum

The draft program of studies, developed in consultation with education stakeholders, is referred to the Minister of Education for approval. Schools may have the opportunity to pilot the program for one year prior to full provincial implementation. This transition year gives schools time to prepare for the new curriculum. When a curriculum is implemented province-wide, all schools must teach the new curriculum. Alberta Education, in partnership with superintendents, boards, teachers, principals, parents and students, shares roles and responsibilities in the effective implementation of a new curriculum.

Alberta Education supports school authorities by producing teacher resources that provide ideas for lesson planning, instructional strategies and student assessment. Also, it provides orientation for school authority leaders and lead teachers about curriculum changes and shares updates at professional conferences and in-services.

<http://www.arpdc.ab.ca>

Professional development funds are provided to seven Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia. Each Regional Consortium organizes and provides activities to respond to in-service needs identified locally. This may include information and orientation sessions related to curriculum revisions.

<http://lrc.education.gov.ab.ca/pro/default.html>

Alberta Education selects and authorizes learning and teaching resources that are designed specifically to support the provincial curriculum. Alberta Education also provides funding to help schools purchase learning and teaching resources through the Learning Resources Centre.

## ► First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

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<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/fnmi.aspx>

<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/fnmi/policies.aspx>

First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples throughout the province have indicated they want their children to complete regular school requirements and achieve the same standards as set for all students in Alberta. Alberta Education shares this goal with parents. The First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework (2002) provides further information.

To support the learning of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, schools are encouraged to use learning resources that include First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives. All students in Alberta need to understand and be aware of First Nations, Métis and Inuit history, culture, lifestyles and heritage. First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) perspectives are infused into the existing Kindergarten to Grade 12 programs of study. Student and teacher resources have been developed by Alberta Education to support the inclusion of FNMI content in teaching and learning.

Both provincially and locally authorized Blackfoot and Cree language and culture courses are offered in the province.

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/308566/aboriginalparenthandbook.pdf>

*A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs* (2000) provides information to assist First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents in working with schools to meet the special education needs of their children. This resource is available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).

<http://lrc.education.gov.ab.ca/pro/resources/item.htm?item-no=415712>

*Our Treasured Children* is a videotape that complements *A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs*. It highlights intergenerational stories from members of the Aboriginal community. The videotape is available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre (LRC).

## ► Daily Physical Activity

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For more information about the DPA policy and resources to support DPA, visit the DPA Web site at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/resources/dpa.aspx>.

School authorities shall ensure that all students in grades 1 to 9 are physically active for a minimum of 30 minutes daily through activities that are organized by the school. Daily Physical Activity (DPA) is based on the belief that healthy students are better able to learn and that school communities provide supportive environments for students to develop positive habits needed for a healthy, active lifestyle.

Schools have the responsibility of creating and nurturing a learning environment for students that supports the development of the lifelong habit for daily physical activity and for healthy lifestyles. The daily physical activities offered in your school should:

- vary in form and intensity
- take into account each student's ability
- consider resources available within the school and the larger community
- allow for student choice.

Parents can assist implementation of DPA and enhance the health benefits received by students through a supportive home environment; e.g., encouraging your child to be active every day, walk your child to school or facilitate a walking school bus program at school.

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/>

For further information and ways to increase physical activity at home, visit the Healthy U Web site or the Public Health Agency of Canada's Web site.

## ► Career and Life Planning

Preparing for life and connecting learning and work is a complex process that begins in the early years of schooling and continues throughout our lives. Alberta schools are taking an active role—along with parents and the community—in helping students manage transitions within the K–12 learning system and when moving into further education, training and/or the workplace.

In junior high school, students begin linking their skills, knowledge, and attitude to occupational possibilities. They begin to develop employability skills in addition to continuing to develop life skills. At this stage, students begin to outline their own learning and career goals.

Career Development activities facilitate the linkages between education, work and further study, and help individuals make informed choices based on self knowledge, understanding of the world around them, identification and pursuit of individual passions, and life goals.

Personal and career development activities and outcomes are integrated into junior high school courses and programs. The following junior high school programs focus specifically on these topics: Health and Life Skills, Physical Education, and Career and Technology Studies (CTS).

Many junior high schools organize career development activities, such as mentoring, job shadowing, portfolio development and career fairs. Junior high schools encourage students to develop a career plan. Career planning is an ongoing process and therefore plans need to be continually reviewed with the support of schools and families. Students begin to develop a personal portfolio, including a résumé, and may use a career planner such as the *Middle/Junior High School Student Learning–Career Planner* developed by Alberta Education.

The *Student Learning–Career Planner Information Booklet* and the *Middle/Junior High School Student Learning–Career Planner* along with Learning Alberta Information Services (ALIS) are useful tools for teachers, counselors and parents as they work with students to help them manage their career planning process. The information booklet and the junior high school planner are available on the Alberta Education Web site or for purchase from the LRC. ALIS is available to all Albertans to assist them in their career planning.

<http://education.alberta.ca/apps/publications/>

[http://education.gov.ab.ca/k\\_12/curriculum/cardir\\_ir.pdf](http://education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/cardir_ir.pdf)  
[pdf version]

[http://education.gov.ab.ca/k\\_12/curriculum/JHPlan.doc](http://education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/JHPlan.doc)  
[word version]

[http://education.gov.ab.ca/k\\_12/curriculum/cardir.pdf](http://education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/curriculum/cardir.pdf)

<http://alis.alberta.ca>

## ▣ WorldSkills International

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WorldSkills is a global movement of agencies and committed individuals focused on developing and promoting high performance among young people in skilled trades and technologies that are vital to economic and social success. WorldSkills International represents approximately 50 countries with a major objective to carry out a WorldSkills competition every two years.

- This event is an opportunity for students, parents, teachers and administrators to come and view the competition and participate in a hands-on interactive opportunity to try a trade.
- Alberta is participating in WorldSkills Calgary 2009 to demonstrate the value of trades and technology training and occupations as excellent career options for young people.
- WorldSkills Shizuoka 2007 was held in Japan, and now the world's attention is on Calgary. Mark it in your calendar to attend the 2009 competition in Calgary from September 1–7, 2009.
- This event is an exciting opportunity for Canadian youth to showcase their skills and talents on a global stage.
- This event brings youth, educators and industry representatives together to witness an exceptional display of skill and ingenuity.
- The trades and technology sectors are challenging and rewarding career choices.
- People who work in trades and technology occupations are highly skilled and motivated, and make an invaluable contribution to our economy.
- Ensuring all Albertans are able to share their skills, knowledge and ideas will help secure the province's well-being and quality of life for future generations, and will help Alberta's economy to become more knowledge-based.

## **WorldSkills Calgary 2009 Quick Facts**

- Largest international competition in Calgary since the 1988 Olympics
- Approximately 1000 competitors from 50 member countries will compete (30 languages)
- 2500 international experts, delegates and judges will attend
- 150 000 student and public spectators will attend the competition
- 45 official skill categories
- September 1–7, 2009 at Stampede Park in Calgary for four days of competition occurring on September 2–5, 2009
- Check out [www.worldskills2009.com](http://www.worldskills2009.com) for more details



## ▣ Supports for Learning

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Students have individual learning needs. Schools, supported by Alberta Education, provide a variety of programs and services to meet the individual needs of students.

### English as a Second Language

<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/esl.aspx>

Many children born in Canada have a first language other than English and many students move here from non-English speaking countries. Schools provide additional assistance for English as a Second Language (ESL) students in Kindergarten to Grade 12. This helps them acquire sufficient fluency in English so they can function in the regular classroom as quickly as possible.

### Special Education

<http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources/learningteam.aspx>

Some students require specialized learning opportunities in order to receive an education. School boards must provide special education programming that is consistent with the student's identified learning needs. If you feel your child would benefit from additional support, you should talk to the classroom teacher. Your child's teacher or the school principal will have information about the special education services and programming available through the school jurisdiction. To assist you in discussing your child's needs, access *The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs* through the link provided.

### Distributed Learning

Alberta Education provides leadership and resources for distributed learning in Alberta's educational institutions. Distributed learning is a model through which learning is distributed among a variety of delivery formats and mediums—print, digital (online) and traditional delivery methods. Teachers, students and content can be located in different, noncentralized locations, enabling student learning any time, any place and at any pace.

<http://lrc.education.gov.ab.ca/pro/default.html>

Distributed learning resources are provincially authorized resources that support educational program delivery in Alberta. For information about purchasing distributed learning resources, contact the Learning Resources Centre.

## Digital Resources to Support Curriculum Outcomes

<http://learnalberta.ca>

LearnAlberta.ca is a Web site that provides quality online resources to the Kindergarten to Grade 12 community in Alberta. It is a safe, reliable and innovative collection of learning resources provided by Alberta Education. Students, teachers and parents can access multimedia learning resources here that are based on Alberta Education curriculum guidelines. A featured resource is the Online Reference Centre, a collection of multimedia encyclopedias in French and English. These reference materials include newspapers, magazines, books, maps, pictures, videos and transcripts suitable for all grades and subject areas.

The Web site is password protected, with each school authority receiving a new username and password each August. Usernames and passwords are available from school principals or by contacting the Alberta Education Client Services HelpDesk between 8:15 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays:

Telephone: 780-427-5318 (toll-free using 310-0000)

E-mail: [cshelpdesk@gov.ab.ca](mailto:cshelpdesk@gov.ab.ca)

Please note that you will need to provide the name of your school and school authority.

## ► Knowledge and Employability

<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/know.aspx>

Knowledge and Employability is a series of courses rather than a program. This allows schools and students to have some flexibility in offering and selecting the courses based on highest level of achievement and areas of need. These courses begin in the Grade 8 year of schooling and continue through the Grade 12 year of schooling. During grades 8–12, students may enroll in one or more courses at any appropriate entrance/registration date.

Knowledge and Employability courses are designed for the student who learns best when the focus is on the development and application of reading, writing and mathematical literacy and when meaningful connections are made between the home, school, workplace and community through experiential learning experiences. This series of courses provide students with opportunities to experience success and become well-prepared for employment, further studies, citizenship and lifelong learning.

Students who successfully complete Knowledge and Employability courses may qualify for a Certificate of High School Achievement. Students may also transfer into courses leading to an Alberta High School Diploma at any time during their senior high school career.

Knowledge and Employability courses consist of both academic and occupational courses at both the junior and senior high school levels.

Academic subjects:

- Knowledge and Employability English Language Arts 8, 9, 10-4, 20-4, 30-4
- Knowledge and Employability Mathematics 8, 9, 10-4, 20-4
- Knowledge and Employability Science 8, 9, 10-4, 20-4
- Knowledge and Employability Social Studies 8, 9, 10-4, 20-4

Occupational strands:

- Workplace Readiness
- Art/Design and Communication
- Auto Mechanics

- Business Services
- Construction: Building
- Construction: Metal Fabrication
- Cosmetology (senior high only)
- Fabrics
- Foods
- Horticulture
- Human Care
- Natural Resources (senior high only).

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/524889/infomanual.pdf>

For more information, refer to the *Information Manual for Knowledge and Employability Courses, Grades 8–12, Revised 2008*. The manual is available on the Alberta Education Web site or for purchase from the LRC.

## ▣ Assessment

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<http://education.alberta.ca/admin/testing/achievement.aspx>

### Assessing Student Achievement

In the classroom, a teacher uses a variety of means to assess students' learning throughout the school year. These assessments are based on the instruction being provided, in order to inform the teacher's planning from day to day. Classroom assessment may serve a diagnostic purpose, indicating students' strengths and weaknesses in specific skill areas. At other times classroom assessment may be formative, indicating how well students have achieved in a unit of study or how well they have achieved to a particular point in the course. At the end of a school year, a teacher also assesses how well the students have achieved the expected learning outcomes in the curriculum for that grade. This type of assessment is designed primarily for reporting purposes. All these classroom assessments are integral to instruction.

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/938683/09002abedglabrocv2.pdf>

### Grade Level of Achievement (GLA)

Grade Level of Achievement is the teacher's professional judgement of a student's achievement in a core subject (language arts, mathematics, science and social studies).

Alberta teachers must report grades 1–9 student Grade Level of Achievement to parents.

## ► Planning for Senior High School

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During their junior high years, students make decisions about their senior high school program. It helps to keep in mind that:

- strengths, interests and realistic career paths play a major role in decision making
- specific courses are required for an Alberta High School Diploma or Certificate of High School Achievement
- knowledge of course sequences is important, because many courses require prerequisites.

Guidance from the school and classroom teacher is available. Planning for senior high school is more effective when students and parents are familiar with requirements and work closely with teachers.

Alberta Education provides information on planning for senior high school through a variety of resources, including the following:

- *Senior High School Mathematics Programs: Revised Handbook for Parents and Students*
- *Curriculum Handbooks for Parents: Senior High School*

<http://education.alberta.ca/admin/resources/guidetoed.aspx>

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/645731/handbk.pdf>

<http://education.alberta.ca/parents/resources/handbook.aspx>

## Feedback Form

### Curriculum Handbook for Parents 2009–2010: Grade 8

Please indicate whether you are a:

- ☐ Parent      ☐ Teacher      ☐ School Administrator      ☐ District Administrator      ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate whether you used:

- ☐ a print copy      ☐ the online format      ☐ both

Please respond to the following by placing a check mark under **Strongly Disagree**, **Disagree**, **Agree** or **Strongly Agree**.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The handbook provides useful information.				
2. The amount of information is appropriate.				
3. The reading level is appropriate.				
4. The layout and organization are user-friendly.				
5. The links to the Alberta Education Web site are helpful.				
6. Downloading and printing is easy.				

Grade: Kindergarten    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    Senior High  
Grade level used:      ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

How can this handbook be made more helpful to parents?

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*Thank you for your feedback.*

*Please send your response to:*

**Communications Coordinator**  
Alberta Education  
10044 – 108 Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
T5J 5E6  
Fax: 780-422-3745







